MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you also wish to say something on this?

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Yes, Sir.

The question I had raised was precisely this: What is the extent of cooperation from the FBI? It would seem that the FBI was in full knowledge of the antecedents of this person, Headley, and, clearly, from the reports it is emerging that, perhaps, the Indian agencies were not aware of his antecedents. Yesterday, the Foreign Secretary had given a sort of certificate to the FBI saying that they were extending full cooperation to India, whereas the Home Ministry sources have expressed some concern. So, my question is: Is there any difference in the perception of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs on this? And, is it, at all, necessary, when such an important issue is there, that the Prime Minister should take the House into confidence on this matter? I don't think this is a party issue. This is an issue which concerns all Indian citizens. It is our people, our country, our cities which are the target of attacks. And it is with this spirit that I would request the Prime Minister to give some clarification as to what we are doing as far as getting information from the FBI is concerned. Are we taking it up with the FBI as to why we were not informed in the FBI knew of this person's antecedents?

श्री अमर सिंह (उत्तर प्रदेश) : माननीय सभापति जी, यह गंभीर मसला है और पूरे भारत को उद्वेलित कर रहा है। वर्ष 2008 से अमेरिकन लोगों को पता था कि यह व्यक्ति ड्रग ट्रेफिकिंग में लिप्त है। इसका असली नाम दाउद जिलानी है और इस दाउद को हेडली बना दिया गया और यह हिन्दुस्तान के लिए बहुत डेडली हो गया। सारी खबर होने के बावजूद हमारे साथ अमेरिका ने यह सूचना शेयर क्यों नहीं की? सबसे बड़े दु:ख की बात यह है कि आज यह अखबरों के माध्यम से और कल सीएनएन-आईबीएन के माध्यम से पता चला है। निरुपमा राव जी ने भी यह सूचना दी है, जो हमारी विदेश सचिव हैं कि हेडली के आने जाने की सारी सूचना शिकागो स्थित भारतीय वाणिज्य दूतावास से गायब हो गई है। यह भी एक आरोप लगाया गया है, मैं यह दावे से नहीं कह रहा हूं कि काउंसलर जनरल ने पाकिस्तानी मूल के नागरिकों के लिए, जो उनको एक विशेषाधिकार है, उन्होंने यह सारा वेवर किया है। कितनी बार यह दाउद जिलानी ऊर्फ हेडली है, यह अमेरिका में ड्रग ट्रेफिकिंग में पकड़ा गया है और अमेरिकन एजेंट के रूप में पकड़ा गया है। अगर अमेरिका के लोग आते हैं, तो सबकी पूरी जांच करके जाते हैं, लेकिन जब हमारे अधिकारी अमेरिका जाते हैं, तो वे डेविड हेडली से मिलते भी नहीं हैं। या तो डेविड हेडली को भारत को दिया जाए, क्योंकि 26/11 का मामला बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है, या अगर उसे भारत को सुपुर्द नहीं किया जा रहा है, तो प्रधान मंत्री जी सदन में मौजूद हैं, वे बताएं कि हम निरुपमा राव की बात सच मानें, विदेश मंत्री की बात सच मानें या गृह मंत्रालय के अन्दर इसके बारे में कोई संदेह है। यह मामला बहुत ही गम्भीर है। यह मामला जल्द-से-जल्द सुलझना चाहिए और देश को और सदन को यह पता लगना चाहिए कि इसके अन्दर सच्चाई क्या है। क्या अमेरिका हमारा साथ दे रहा है या अमेरिका हमें गुमराह कर रहा है?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Thank you. I am sure, the Government will respond to this at an appropriate time. Now, we can go back to the Question Hour. Question No. 401.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Decline in tourist traffic in Assam

*401. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether tourist traffic in Assam has declined due to recurring serial bomb blasts which occurred in different parts of the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years and arrival of domestic and foreign tourists during the last three years in North Eastern Region and Assam;

(c) the percentage share of Assam thereof;

(d) the important and immediate steps, schemes, programmes her Ministry has introduced to improve, boost and attract tourists to the North Eastern region and Assam at this hour;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) to (c) The number of domestic and foreign tourist visits in North-Eastern States and Assam during 2006, 2007 and 2008, as well as the percentage share of Assam in these tourist visits figures of North East for these years are given below:-

(Numbers in thousand)

	2006	2007	2008
Number of domestic tourist visits in North-Eastern States	4457	4726	5145
Number of foreign tourist visits in North-Eastern States	39	43	48
Number of domestic tourist visits in Assam	3269	3437	3617
Number of foreign tourist visits in Assam	11	13	14
Share of Assam in domestic tourist visits in North-Eastern States	73.3%	72.7%	70.3%
Share of Assam in foreign tourist visits in North-Eastern States	28.9%	30.0%	30.3%

Figures presented in the above Table reveal that there has been an increase in tourist traffic in Assam during 2006 to 2008.

(d) to (f) Development and promotion of tourism is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to State Governments/UT Administrations for tourism projects under the scheme of 'Product/Infrastructure development of tourism destinations/circuits' on the basis of proposals received from them subject to availability of funds and inter-se-priority.

To boost tourism in the North Eastern Region (NER), Government of India has given relaxation to its employees to travel by air and convert one block of Home Town Leave Travel Concession (LTC) into LTC for destinations in the NER. Further, Protected Area Permit (PAP)/Restricted Area Permit (RAP) regime in Arunachai Pradesh and Sikkim have been relaxed.

In addition. Ministry of Tourism has taken following specific initiatives to boost tourism in the NER:-

i) A road show was organized in Kolkata on 12th August, 2009 for providing an opportunity to States of NER and Eastern region to showcase their wide variety of tourism products to domestic and international travelers, the media, consumers, etc. The road show also provided a platform for one to one business meetings between travel and trade partners of the region with other regions of the country.

ii) Market Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme has been introduced to provide incentives to domestic tourism service providers. For NER, additional incentives over and above those available for other regions have been provided.

iii) Publicity material promoting NER has been brought out and NER specific publicity campaigns have been launched through print and electronic media.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Sir, the natural beauty of Assam and the North-Eastern Region is God gifted. Sir, Assam is famous for Kaziranga National Park for One-Horned Rhino. The world's largest river island, Majuli in the Brahmaputra river, is the centre of the century old Vaishnava culture and the sect established by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev. Sir, Assam is the place of integrity, where mandir and masjid are situated in the same campus.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question, please.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Sir, Tawang of Arunachal Pradesh, the beauty of Tawang of Arunachal Pradesh can be compared only with Switzerland.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your supplementary?

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Sir, I am coming to my supplementary. This is the way I bring up this question. Due to the negligence of the successive Central Governments the tourism sector and its infrastructure is yet to gain momentum in Assam and the North-Eastern Region. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether the Government of India is going to take up special measures to popularise and give wide publicity to attract foreign and domestic tourists to Assam and the North-Eastern Region. What is the total budgetary allocation of the Tourism Ministry in the current financial year?

MR. CHAIRMAN: One question, please.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: What is the total share of Assam and the North-Eastern Region in this regard?

KUMARI SELJA: Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that North-East receives our utmost attention in the country, as far as promotion of tourism is concerned. Sir, I can share with the Hon. Member and with the House that 10 per cent of our funds are allocated for the North-East. In the year, 2007-08, the funds allocated were Rs.96 crores, but the funds released were Rs.128 crores, which means, the funds released as percentage of the funds allocated was 134 per cent. Similarly, in the year 2009-10, the funds allocated are Rs.100 crores and already the funds released are Rs.112

crores. Sir, I myself recently had a meeting of all the North-Eastern States in Gangtok and the States were represented either through their Ministers or the officials in that Zonal Meeting. And we discussed at length about the particular interests which should come from the North-Eastern States. Sir, there are some States which are still lagging a bit behind. But, I can assure the hon. Member and the House that the North-Eastern Region, including Assam will always receive our utmost attention.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Sir, in the statement the hon. Minister has said that the number of foreign tourists who visited Assam in the year 2006 was only 11,000; in the year 2007, it was only 13,000 and in the year 2008, it was only 14,000. When compared with other parts of the country and looking at the beauty of the north-eastern region, this is a negligible percentage of foreign tourists visiting the north-eastern region and Assam. One ot the basic reasons for this poor show is the restricted visa permit for foreign tourists in Assam and north-eastern region. Those who have the valid passports are not getting visa to enter Assam. But, Sir, without passport and visa, thousands of Bangladeshis from Indo-Bangladesn border always enter into Assam.

Distance from Assam to Myanmar is less than forty-five minutes. Distance from Assam to China is about two hours only. Earlier, there was road connectivity between the north-eastern region and the South-East Asia *via* Myanmar. Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any important steps and initiatives have been taken by the Ministry of Tourism to open the route link to increase the tourisrn in north-eastern region in line with the Look East policy of the Government of India to attract foreign tourists from South-East Asia. I want to have the answers for these questions from the hon. Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Why could you not have asked these questions without a preliminary statement?

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Sir, this was required.

KUMARI SELJA: Sir, it is the policy of the Government that we must open up the north-eastern region to visitors not only from the rest of India but also to foreign tourists. Sir, a number of measures have been taken for opening up this region. Sir, airports are being upgraded constantly. We have opened up not yet for the tourists but we have opened up our borders in Sikkim for trade with China. Even otherwise, there are visitors who are willing to go to the north-east. Recently, we have relaxed protected area permit and restricted area permit regime for some regions in the north-east, it is our constant endeavour that we must open up this region for other country tourists as well.

MR, CHAIRMAN: Shri Ratanpuri, if you have a question on tourism in Assam, you may ask.

SHRI G.N. RATANPURI: Yes, Sir. There should be no apprehension before I ask any question. Sir, will the hon. Minister let the House know whether her Ministry or our dipomatic missions in different countries take any steps to dispel exaggerated concerns for safety of tourists in militancy-affected areas of the country like Kashmir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please ask a supplementary question on this question.

SHRI G.N. RATANPURI: Sir, Assam is also a militancy-affected area. I would like to know whether the Government is making efforts to dispel exaggerated concerns.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

KUMARI SELJA: Sir, definitely whenever our promotions are taking place abroad, we are taking care that our marketing is also focused on the north-eastern region, on Kashmir and all parts of the country. We have to promote the beauty of our north-eastern region, the beauty of Kashmir and our culture, and we are doing it constantly.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I straightaway ask this question to the hon. Minister, through you, Sir. How many Government employees have made use of the leave travel concession which has been given? Or there has been no effort made by any employees to avail this? What kind of special security is being provided to the tourists in different parts of Assam?

KUMARI SELJA: Sir, I will be able to supply to the hon. Member the exact figures later.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, from the figures, it is seen that tourist traffic has not been on the decrease. Had there not been naxalism, insurgency or Maoism, would it not be much better? What I am trying to ask is, the tourist traffic would be much better if this kind of challenges were not there.

KUMARI SELJA: Sir, I definitely agree that we do need a more peaceful atmosphere throughout the country to have better increase in tourist traffic and, I think, all of us have to work towards that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question. ...*(Interruptions)*... We have already finished three. ...*(Interruptions)*... No, no, please. ...*(Interruptions)*... I am afraid there are other Members from the North-East also. ...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Sarkar, please resume your place. ...*(Interruptions)*... Question No.402.

CSIR Laboratories

*402. SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state Government's thinking on the Nobel Laureate Venkataraman Ramakrishnan's suggestion to embed Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) laboratories in our universities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

CSIR in pursuance of its mandate for scientific and industrial research has established close linkages with the University system for basic and applied research. Many academic institutions have their campuses or facilities co-located alongside CSIR Laboratories. Examples include the Indian